9. (Amended) The method according to Claim 7, wherein said mutant high alkaline protease [exhibiting altered protease activity] is obtained from *Bacillus* novo species PB92.

12. (Amended) A method of obtaining an alkalophilic *Bacillus* strain having no detectable extracellular high alkaline protease, said method comprising:

transforming an alkalophilic *Bacillus* strain with a cloning vector comprising the 5' and the 3' flanking regions but not the coding region of gene coding for the high alkaline protease and encoding a replication function, wherein a sufficient amount of said flanking regions is present to provide for homologous recombination with an indigenous gene coding for the high alkaline protease whereby transformants are obtained;

growing said transformants under growth conditions to which the replication function of said cloning vector is sensitive whereby the replication function encoded by said vector is inactivated; and

isolating said transformants identified as having said inactivated replication function and no detectable extracellular high alkaline protease.

19. (Amended) A detergent composition comprising as an active ingredient one or more mutant forms of high alkaline protease [exhibiting altered protease activity], wherein at least one of a said mutant form of high alkaline protease has been prepared according to the method of Claim 23.

23. (Amended) A method for production of a mutated high alkaline protease [exhibiting altered protease activity] and substantially free of indigenous extracellular high alkaline protease, said method comprising:

growing an alkalophilic *Bacillus* strain host substantially incapable of reversion and having no detectable indigenous extracellular protease as a result of deletion of the gene for indigenous extracellular protease transformed with an expression cassette providing for expression of a said mutant high alkaline protease in said host, whereby said mutant high alkaline protease is produced; and

isolating said mutant high alkaline protease.

24. (Amended) A method for preparing a detergent composition, which comprises the step of combining a detergent composition with, as an active ingredient, one or more mutant forms of a high alkaline protease [exhibiting altered protease activity], wherein at least one of

a said mutant form of high alkaline protease has been prepared according to the method of Claim 23.

25. (Amended) A method for processing laundry, which comprises the step of contacting said laundry with a detergent composition comprising as an active ingredient one or more mutant forms of a high alkaline protease [exhibiting altered protease activity], wherein at least one of a said mutant form of high alkaline protease has been prepared according to the method of Claim 23.

26. (Amended) A method for production of a mutated high alkaline protease [exhibiting altered protease activity and] substantially free of indigenous extracellular protease, said method comprising:

growing an asporogenous *Bacillus* strain host having a reduced indigenous extracellular protease level as a result of deletion of the gene for said indigenous extracellular protease transformed with an expression cassette providing for expression of a mutated high alkaline protease [exhibiting altered protease activity] in said host, whereby said mutated high alkaline protease is produced; and

isolating said mutant high-alkaline protease.

27. (Amended) A method of obtaining an alkalophilic *Bacillus* strain having no detectable extracellular high alkaline protease, said method comprising:

transforming an alkalophilic *Bacillus* strain with a cloning vector comprising the 5' and the 3' flanking regions but not the coding region of gene coding for the high alkaline protease and wherein a sufficient amount of said flanking regions is present to provide for illegitimate recombination with an indigenous gene coding for the high alkaline protease whereby transformants are obtained;

growing said transformants under growth conditions to which the replication function of said cloning vector is sensitive whereby the replication function encoded by said vector is inactivated; and

isolating said transformants identified as having said inactivated replication function and no detectable extracellular high alkaline protease.